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The Making of Middle East Politics

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The regional uprisings that came to be known as the "Arab Spring" began unfolding just four months after the first edition of this text appeared. That volume described and analyzed the predominance of authoritarian forms of rule in the Middle East and speculated—not especially optimistically—about prospects for change in the direction of freer and more plural politics. Beginning in December 2010 and throughout 2011, as demonstrators confronted dictators across the Arab world demanding more accountable, more participatory, and less corrupt governance, it seemed everything was changing. After decades in office, presidents fell from power in Tunisia, then Egypt, then Libya and Yemen, while another engaged in a desperately violent attempt to cling to power in Syria. Serious political turbulence struck monarchies as well, as citizens in Bahrain, Morocco, and Jordan called for thoroughgoing changes to the rules of the political game. These developments were broadcast on Al-Jazeera and other satellite channels, while social media vehicles like Twitter and Facebook also played a role in the mobilization, coordination, and dissemination of political dissent. The original edition of this text appeared to be woefully out of date.

Yet as 2012 came to a close the picture was more variegated. To be sure, the Middle East is not the same as it was prior to the uprisings. Everywhere the political calculus of those who rule and those who are ruled has been changed by the dramatic wave of demonstrations and their aftermath. Still, two years now since it began, the Arab Spring has dramatically altered political systems in only five of the region's twenty countries. As of this writing, one can be reasonably optimistic about the prospects for more competitive, freer politics in just two or perhaps three of those five cases.

Thus, plenty of authoritarian polities remain to study and understand—even if their leaders now have new challenges to navigate as they strategize to shore up their rule.

With the Arab Spring uprisings as a backdrop, then, this text introduces readers to the contemporary comparative politics of the Middle East. What does it mean to study the *comparative* politics of this region? Scholars of comparative politics study the internal political dynamics of countries (rather than relations between or among countries, which is *international* politics). So, for example, instead of exploring when and why countries in the region go to war with one another, we will explore how Middle Eastern governments are structured, who opposes those governments and why, how oppositions work to bring about change, and so forth. Some comparativists tackle this task by deeply mastering the internal politics of one country. Others study a country's domestic politics while also comparing and contrasting what they find with what is happening in other national contexts. Comparativists typically ask themselves what political trends are similar across countries—but also what differences exist, and why? Why did many authoritarian regimes buckle in the face of Arab Spring uprisings, while many, many more survived? Some buckled relatively peacefully, while significant blood was shed elsewhere—why? What political, social, economic, and other factors help us to understand both the similarities and the differences that we observe? This is the stuff of comparative politics. We learn about broader political science processes by studying a collection of countries' politics individually as well as in relation to one another. This text allows the reader to do both.

With comparative politics thus explained, let us now turn to defining the Middle East. What the Middle East is turns out to be a complex question. The name *Middle East* was not attached to the area by its residents themselves. Rather, beginning in the nineteenth century, political elites in Europe and the United States coined the terms *Near East* and *Middle East* to refer to (various delineations of) territories that lay between Western Europe and the *Far East* (China, Japan, etc.). Because the term *Middle East* was bestowed on the region by outside powers according to their own particular political, strategic, and geographic perspectives, it has been criticized as West- or Euro-centric. Still, it is in wide use today and typically refers to the geographic region bounded to the north by Turkey, to the east by Iran, to the west by Egypt, and to the south by the Arabian Peninsula (see Figure 1.1). In addition to Egypt, Turkey, and Iran, the Middle East thus includes Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Oman, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon.

The material in this book also encompasses North Africa, referring to the northernmost tier of African countries that border the Mediterranean Sea: Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya. Definitions of *North Africa* vary

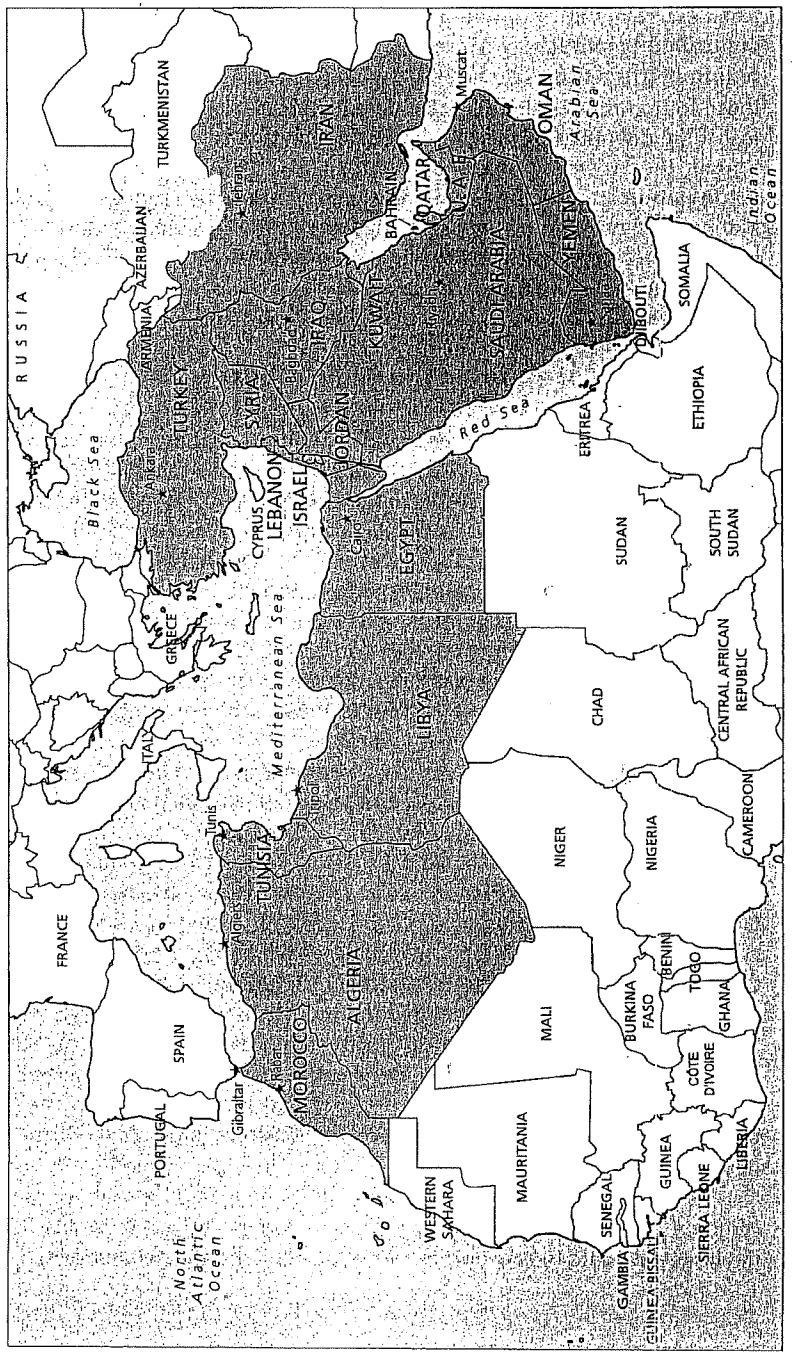

Figure 1.1 Map of the Middle East and North Africa

somewhat; for instance, in its definition of *Northern Africa,* the United Nations (UN) includes Sudan and the Western Sahara (a disputed territory controlled primarily by Morocco). Others sometimes include Mauritania within North Africa. We delimit North Africa as we do primarily because these four countries share a great deal in common with the political dynamics of the countries of the Middle East—and this is much less the case with Sudan, the Western Sahara, and Mauritania. *MENA* is a commonly used acronym referring to the Middle East and North Africa thus delineated, and readers will encounter it in this text. For simplicity's sake, in this book the term *Middle East* will refer to the countries of the Middle East and North Africa (those highlighted in Figure 1.1).

An Overview of States in the Region Today

The Middle East encompasses twenty countries that are home to approximately 460 million people. Most of these countries are Arab, meaning that their citizens speak the Arabic language and perceive that they have a shared historical, cultural, and social experience as Arabs. Three of the twenty countries are not Arab, however.[1] The national language of Israel is Hebrew, and while many Israelis speak Arabic, the historical, cultural, and social bond for the majority of Israelis emerges from their identity as Jews. Turkey and Iran also are not Arab countries. Turks are a different ethnic group and speak Turkish, a language that linguistically is unrelated to Arabic. The dominant language in Iran is Farsi, which—although written in Arabic script—also is unrelated to Arabic.

Many unwittingly think that the "Middle East" and the "Muslim world" are one and the same. Certainly, the vast majority of people living in all Middle East countries save Israel are Muslim. At the same time, religious minorities—especially Jews and Christians—are to be found in most of them. For example, Christians of a variety of denominations (Maronite Catholic, Greek Orthodox, and others) make up perhaps as much as 40 percent of the Lebanese population. Nearly 10 percent of Egyptians are Coptic Christians, and approximately 6 percent of Jordanians are Christian, most of them Greek Orthodox. Meanwhile, the Muslim world extends well beyond the Middle East. Muslim-majority countries are found in sub-Saharan Africa, Central Asia, and South and Southeast Asia. So the Middle East is just a small slice of the Muslim world in terms of both geography and population. Indeed, a majority of the world's Muslims live outside of the Middle East.

Table 1.1 provides basic statistical information about the countries of the Middle East. In terms of sheer size, Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Libya, and Iran are the largest Middle East countries; Bahrain and Palestine, by contrast, occupy

Table 1.1 Statistical Snapshot of Middle East Countries

Country	Land Area (sq. km)	Population 2011	Urban Population (% of total) 2011	Fertility Rate, Total (births per woman) 2010	GDP per Capita (constant 2000 US$) 2009	Literacy Rate, Adult Female (% of females ages 15 and above) 2005–2009
Algeria	2,381,740	35,980,193	73	2	2,193	64
Bahrain	760	1,323,535	89	3	11,601	90
Egypt	995,450	82,536,770	44	3	1,912	58
Iran	1,628,550	74,798,599	69	2	2,162	81
Iraq	434,320	32,961,959	67	5	752	70
Israel	21,640	7,765,700	92	3	21,602	n.a.
Jordan	88,780	6,181,000	83	4	2,577	89
Kuwait	17,820	2,818,042	98	2	23,116	92
Lebanon	10,230	4,259,405	87	2	6,350	86
Libya	1,759,540	6,422,772	78	3	7,885	82
Morocco	446,300	32,272,974	57	2	1,797	44
Oman	309,500	2,846,145	73	2	11,192	81
Palestine	6,020	4,019,433	74	4	1,056[a]	92
Qatar	11,590	1,870,041	99	2	30,547	93
Saudi Arabia	2,149,690	28,082,541	82	3	9,294	81
Syria	183,630	20,820,311	56	3	1,509	78
Tunisia	155,360	10,673,800	66	2	3,084	71
Turkey	769,630	73,639,596	71	2	4,969	85
United Arab Emirates	83,600	7,890,924	84	2	22,507	91
Yemen	527,970	24,799,880	32	5	583	45

Source: World Bank, *World Development Indicators,* various years (Washington, DC).
Notes: a. This value is from 2005.
n.a. indicates data are not available.

tiny pieces of territory. In terms of population, Egypt, Turkey, and Iran are the region's powerhouses, with populations upward of 70 million, while tiny Bahrain has a population of just over 1 million. More than 90 percent of Israelis, Kuwaitis, and Qataris live in urban areas, compared to only 32 percent of Yemenis and only 44 percent of Egyptians. Populations are growing most rapidly in Iraq and Yemen, where the average number of births per woman is five; by contrast, ten Middle East countries have fertility rates of just two births per woman. On a per capita basis, the economies of Qatar, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, and Israel produce the most. Yemen is the region's poorest country measured in terms of economic output, followed by Iraq and Palestine. Finally, the proportion of adult females who are literate ranges from just 45 percent in Yemen, to around 65 percent in Algeria, to 93 percent in Qatar. Clearly, there is considerable variation in the region when it comes to land, population, and indicators of development.

One of the main things the discipline of comparative politics studies is the type of governmental system a country has. Often referred to as a *regime*, a governmental system refers not to the particular group of individuals filling key offices at a given point in time—this is simply a *government*—but rather more broadly to the processes by which leaders are selected (election? dynastic succession? military coup?) and how those leaders in turn exercise power (in consultation with others according to a rule of law? individually and arbitrarily? somewhere in between?). For decades and until the Arab uprisings of 2010–2011, systems of government in the Middle East were, almost without exception, authoritarian. Moreover, for the last quarter of the twentieth century and the first decade of the twenty-first, the region was a global outlier in that, while every other area of the world saw (at least some) dictatorships fall and democracies erected in their stead, dictatorships in the Middle East stood firm and persisted. By 2011 this was no longer the case, and this chapter will close with an introduction to the Arab Spring, but the prevalence and endurance of authoritarian rule in the region prior to 2011 are a crucial context for understanding contemporary politics in the Middle East.

What, generally, does "authoritarian" rule look like? Leaders are not selected through free and fair elections, and a relatively narrow group of people control the state apparatus and are not held accountable for their decisions by the broader public. Although there is variation from case to case, political rights and civil liberties are generally quite limited. Political rights refer to norms such as free and fair elections for the chief executive and the legislature; the ability of citizens to organize in multiple political parties and compete in elections free from interference by the military, religious, or other powerful groups; the absence of discrimination against cultural, ethnic, religious, or other minority groups; and transparent, accountable, noncorrupt government. Civil liberties refer to freedom of expression and belief,

freedom of association and organization, the rule of law, and individual rights.[2] Table 1.2 lists the rankings given to Middle East countries for political rights and civil liberties in 2008 and 2011 by Freedom House, a prominent nongovernmental organization (NGO) that gauges such rights globally.

Table 1.2 demonstrates that in 2011 only three countries—Israel, Turkey, and Tunisia—scored between 1 and 3 on the political rights scale and thus could be considered relatively free. Meanwhile, 16 of 20 countries scored a 5, 6, or 7—on the "not free" end of the scale. Kuwait, where a dynastic monarchy and an assertive parliament struggle for power, scored an "in-between" 4. While many countries have slightly better civil liberties scores, the overall civil liberties picture is very similar to that for political rights.

While most Middle Eastern regimes remain authoritarian, they are not homogeneously so. Dictatorship takes more than one form in the area. The two main variants are monarchies and republics. The monarchies are led by kings whose reigns are not conferred by elections; instead, when incumbents die or become incapacitated, leadership is passed down hereditarily

Table 1.2 Political and Civil Rights in the Middle East According to Freedom House

	Political Rights		Civil Liberties	
Country	2008	2011	2008	2011
Algeria	6	6	5	5
Bahrain	5	6	5	6
Egypt	6	6	5	5
Iran	6	6	6	6
Iraq	6	5	6	6
Israel	1	1	2	2
Jordan	5	6	4	5
Kuwait	4	4	4	5
Lebanon	5	5	4	4
Libya	7	7	7	6
Morocco	5	5	4	4
Oman	6	6	5	5
Palestine	5	6	6	6/5[a]
Qatar	6	6	5	5
Saudi Arabia	7	7	6	7
Syria	7	7	6	7
Tunisia	7	3	5	4
Turkey	3	3	3	3
United Arab Emirates	6	6	5	6
Yemen	5	6	5	6

Source: Freedom House.
Notes: Scale is 1–7, with 1 denoting "most free," and 7 denoting "least free."
a. 6 is for the Gaza Strip; 5 is for the West Bank.

through ruling families. In monarchies, power rests in and emanates from the ruling family and those elites who are allied to it. The region's monarchies are Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the UAE, Morocco, Kuwait, Bahrain, Jordan, and Oman.

The region's authoritarian republics are led by presidents, whose terms in office are conferred by elections. Elections are not free or fair, but they are held, usually at regular intervals, both for the chief executive position and for national parliaments. In these republics, political power typically emanates from preponderant political parties that are headed by the president, are backed by the military, and have access to large amounts of state revenues. Syria, Algeria, and Yemen are the Middle East's authoritarian republics—though as of this writing Syria is plunged in civil war while Yemen is navigating a political transition whose ultimate end point is uncertain. Prior to the Arab uprisings, Tunisia and Egypt also were authoritarian republics.

There is now a growing number of exceptions to authoritarian rule in the Middle East. The region comprises a number of countries with political systems wherein outsiders or opposition parties can successfully oust incumbent chief executives in elections—something that is simply not possible in the monarchies and authoritarian republics. Israel boasts free, fair, competitive, multiparty elections for seats in its parliament; for the past several decades, the prime ministerial position has changed hands regularly, alternating among two or three leading political parties. Turkey too can be labeled democratic: since 1950, free, fair, competitive, multiparty elections have determined which parties sit in the Turkish parliament and make up the cabinet; the prime ministerial office has rotated among several political parties on the left and the right of the political spectrum, and of late there has been alternation at the level of the presidency as well. Lebanon and Iraq hold competitive elections to determine the composition of parliaments and cabinets, which then set policy in those countries. And during the Arab Spring, Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya held multiparty elections to select parliaments, constituent assemblies, and/or presidents—though only time will tell if this method of leadership selection will continue to be the norm in those countries. As will be noticed in Table 1.2, the Freedom House scores for Lebanon, Iraq, Egypt, and Libya—and to a lesser extent Turkey and Tunisia—are below that of Israel, a fact attributable to the existence of ongoing limitations on liberties in those political communities. However, on the basic matter of whether or not incumbent chief executives are able to be removed and replaced through elections, these countries can be considered democratic—or at least "protodemocratic."

Iran's political system constitutes a category of its own, one which features both democratic and authoritarian elements. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, citizens go to the polls regularly to elect a president and parliament.

Historically, such polls have been fair and have featured competition among distinct political camps. Moreover, the presidency has rotated among these camps over the course of the past generation. Yet an institution called the Council of Guardians sits atop these elected bodies and controls their membership through its power to vet all would-be candidates for office. The council also can veto legislation passed by Iran's elected bodies. Ultimate power lies in the hands of Iran's (indirectly elected) Supreme Leader, who controls that country's armed and security forces, judiciary, and media outlets. That Iran's 2011 Freedom House political rights score was a 6 indicates that the authoritarian strands of Iran's political system overpower and marginalize its democratic strands.

This overview is just an introductory taste of contemporary political dynamics in the region. The chapters that follow go into much more detail, both by theme—government-opposition relations, the impact of international politics, economics, civil society, religion, identity, and gender—and by country. The remainder of this chapter provides essential historical knowledge regarding the crucial historical legacies that bear on Middle East politics and society today.

Essential Historical Background

Islamization and Arabization

How did the Middle East come to be predominantly Muslim in terms of faith and predominantly Arab in terms of language and ethnicity? The establishment and spread of Islam began in the seventh century C.E., and it was this process that also Arabized large portions of the region. Prior to the rise of Islam, two empires dominated the Middle East. The Sasanids ruled Iraq and Iran, while the Byzantines ruled the Anatolian Peninsula (modern Turkey), northern Syria, and parts of North Africa, Egypt, and those territories that lie immediately east of the Mediterranean Sea (modern-day Lebanon, Israel, and Palestine). In 610 C.E., a young caravan trader named Muhammad began receiving revelations. He would become the Prophet of Islam, a new faith that was born in Mecca and Medina (cities in what is today Saudi Arabia).

Islam was strictly monotheistic, which stood in contrast to the pagan beliefs of the majority of the tribes who inhabited the Arabian Peninsula at that time. It exhorted those tribes—which often were at war with one another—to see themselves as brothers instead, and to submit to the one true god, Allah. Islam also preached the importance of justice and of caring for the weak in society (the poor, the sick, orphans, and the like). Although Muhammad encountered considerable initial resistance from those to whom

his prophecy represented a threat, by the end of his lifetime he had built a considerable new Muslim community, earning—through genuine conversion, diplomacy, and force—the loyalty of most tribes in the Arabian Peninsula. Upon the Prophet Muhammad's death, the realm of Islam exploded geographically. Arabian tribesmen, with zeal inspired both by their conversion to a new faith and by the prospect of new power and wealth, carried the banner of Islam northward out of the Arabian Peninsula into the "Fertile Crescent" (today's Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Jordan, Israel, and Palestine), then eastward to Iran and westward across North Africa and even into Spain. These expansions destroyed part of the Byzantine and all of the Sasanid empires and paved the way for the creation of two successive Islamic empires: the Umayyad Empire (661–750), with its capital at Damascus, and the Abbasid Empire (750–945), with its capital at Baghdad.

Prior to Islam's emergence, Arabic-speaking tribes lived primarily in the Arabian Peninsula. With the Arab-Muslim conquests into the broader Middle East and subsequent building of empires, however, the pace of Arab peoples moving into the region picked up. Arabic, the language of the conquering empires, became the language of written communication with regard to administrative, religious, and cultural affairs. Non-Arabs gradually adopted the tongue as a result. Over an even longer period of time than Arabization consumed, a majority of people in the lands conquered by Muslim armies became converts to the new faith. These were not forced conversions, however. These Islamic empires allowed Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians to practice their religions unimpeded as long as they paid special taxes. Conversions occurred slowly over time, out of political expediency (to be of the same faith as the ruling elite had its rewards), due to commercial interest (Islamic law and networks facilitated trade), as well as out of a sense of shared cultural and social experience that was acquired over time.

The Ottoman Empire

The last great Islamic empire was the Ottoman Empire, founded by Turkic tribes (thus Turkish- rather than Arabic-speaking) beginning in the thirteenth century and centered on the imperial capital Istanbul. At their peak in the mid–sixteenth century C.E., the Ottomans controlled a breathtaking swath of territory, extending from deep into southeastern Europe, eastward to the Iranian border, southward through the Levant and parts of the Arabian Peninsula, and across North Africa to the Moroccan border. The Ottoman leader, or sultan, controlled a professional army and sat atop a substantial bureaucracy that administrated imperial affairs. He was also the caliph of the Islamic *umma* (community or nation) and used Islam to legitimate his rule. *Sharia* (Islamic law) constituted a core element of Ottoman law, and the *ulama* (clerics) staffed the empire's court and educational systems. Yet while

the Ottomans were an Islamic empire, other religious communities were allowed considerable leeway in terms of freedom of worship and control over local community affairs such as education and social services.

For the purposes of modern politics, two things are crucial to understand about the Ottoman Empire. First, it represented the last era in world history when the Middle East constituted a politically, economically, and militarily more powerful entity than "the West" (meaning, for that time period, Europe and Russia). During the 1500s the Ottomans challenged Venice, Italy, and Spain for supremacy in the Mediterranean. The Ottoman Empire also laid siege to the Habsburg capital of Vienna twice—once in 1529 and again in 1683. While it was victorious neither time, it did implant a pronounced sense of threat among Europeans.

The second critical point is that the tables began to turn in the seventeenth century as European states became increasingly powerful while the Ottoman Empire weakened. European powers successfully challenged the Ottomans for control over lucrative trade routes and penetrated the Ottoman Empire with European-controlled operations that imported European products and exported raw materials. These developments harmed the Ottomans economically, reducing revenues accruing to Ottoman coffers. Politically, modern nation-states emerged in Europe, as did nationalism, defined by James Gelvin as the "belief that because a given population shares (or can be made to share) certain identifiable characteristics—religion, language, shared history, and so on—it merits an independent existence" (2008: 56). Nationalism became a powerful ideology that undermined the multiethnic Ottoman Empire by inspiring many of its subject peoples to attempt to secede. Finally, by the turn of the nineteenth century, European armies had become more professional and deadly, utilizing new technologies, tactics, and organizational strategies. Meanwhile, internal to the empire, the quality of sultans was declining and the central government was weakening relative to provincial power-holders. Military morale and discipline too were waning, in part because the inflation that struck Eurasia at this time devalued troops' pay.

Ottoman elites were painfully aware of this turn of events. In the late 1600s the Ottomans lost territories to Russia, the Habsburgs, Venice, and Poland. Indeed, in 1656 the Venetians destroyed the Ottoman naval fleet. In the late 1700s the Russians repeatedly and successfully advanced on the Ottomans. The Ottomans were now following the Europeans in terms of culture as well. They imported architectural and painting styles, furniture—even tulips. By the 1800s, encouraged by Russia and other European powers, nationalist movements had arisen in Serbia, Greece, Romania, and Bulgaria, and these successfully seceded from the Ottoman Empire.

Ottoman elites were alarmed, of course, and as early as the 1600s began to wonder if and how they could reform the empire in order to better compete

with their European rivals. As the Ottoman community engaged in deep intellectual debates, one camp concluded that if the Ottomans were to become a match for the Europeans, they would need to adopt European innovations in military technology and training and tactics, and political institutions like parliaments. A second camp reached a quite different diagnosis of the problem, however, concluding that Ottoman weakness was a reflection of declining faith. The answer, then, was a return to a reinvigorated and purified Islam, not the mimicking of European ways.

The former camp won out, for a time anyway. During the late eighteenth century and through much of the nineteenth, Ottoman sultans attempted to radically restructure the empire's operations to defend against expected further European encroachment. They changed how their subjects were taxed, both to increase loyalty and to increase revenues flowing to the empire's coffers. They created an Ottoman parliament, modeled after the British and French institutions—in the hope that more inclusive, consultative governance would make for improved subject loyalty and better policy. They brought in European advisers to train new army units in modern warfare techniques, and they overhauled their educational, legal, and bureaucratic systems.

Ultimately, it would be too little, too late. The reforms implemented during the nineteenth century faced significant internal resistance and thus their effectiveness was limited. What's more, the Ottomans could not stem the tide of nationalism and the desire of many Ottoman subject peoples to have their own state. When World War I ended, the Ottomans were on the losing side and would soon be extinguished as an empire.

European Imperialism in the Middle East

The Ottomans' painful experience of decline vis-à-vis an increasingly powerful set of European countries was only the first of a series of conflicts between the Middle East and Europe. The second was an era of direct rule by various European countries over territories in the Middle East. Specifically, beginning in the nineteenth century and continuing through the end of World War I, Britain, France, and Italy took control of the vast majority of the region. Table 1.3 illustrates which European power controlled what Middle East territory (identified by contemporary country names). Sometimes geostrategic affairs motivated the colonizers. Britain's footprint in the Middle East turned on two main concerns: securing access to regional oil supplies and protecting key access routes to India, the "jewel" of the British Crown. Depending on the case, France generally was motivated by its relations with Christian communities and by commercial interests. Intra-European rivalry and the prestige that was attached to overseas colonies also motivated both powers.

Table 1.3 European Imperialism in the Middle East

Country	European Power	Type of Authority	Years
Algeria	France	Colonial	1830–1962
Bahrain	Britain	Treaty	1880–1971
Egypt	Britain	Colonial	1882–1936
Iran	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Iraq	Britain	Mandate	1920–1932
Israel	Britain	Mandate	1920–1948
Jordan	Britain	Mandate	1920–1946
Kuwait	Britain	Treaty	1899–1961
Lebanon	France	Mandate	1920–1943
Libya	Italy	Colonial	1911–1951
Morocco	France	Colonial	1912–1956
Oman	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Palestine	Britain	Mandate	1920–1948
Qatar	Britain	Treaty	1916–1971
Saudi Arabia	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Syria	France	Mandate	1920–1946
Tunisia	France	Colonial	1881–1956
Turkey	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
United Arab Emirates	Britain	Treaty	1892–1971
Yemen, South	Britain	Colonial	1839–1967
Yemen, North	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

Note: n.a. indicates not applicable; territory was never controlled by a European power.

The degree to which European powers took over the reins of power in their respective Middle East holdings varied substantially. In part this depended on the type of intervention. Generally, holdings acquired prior to World War I were colonies, territories that European powers conquered unapologetically and exploited for their own purposes in the context of global great-power competition. Holdings acquired after World War I, however, were awarded by the League of Nations under the mandate system in the context of new, more restrictive international norms regarding European control over distant lands. In places where they acted as mandatory powers, Europeans ostensibly had an obligation to protect natives' welfare and prepare them for independence. In the Persian Gulf, British imperialism took the form of a series of treaty relationships negotiated with the ruling families of the small states that lined the coast.

In what ways did European power impact the region during this era? On one end of the spectrum, in Kuwait and the UAE, for example, Britain controlled foreign policy and port operations while leaving domestic political arrangements in those countries largely alone. In Morocco, the French took over domestic affairs—but did so by penetrating and harnessing existing indigenous institutions (like the monarchy), leaving them intact. By

contrast, in Algeria, France uprooted and resettled tribes, destroyed domestic religious institutions, confiscated land, settled more than 150,000 Europeans, and ultimately annexed the entire country (as three separate French provinces). Perhaps even more dramatically, at World War I's end, France and Britain literally drew the modern-day boundaries of Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Jordan, and Israel/Palestine; engineered their respective political systems; and—in Iraq and Jordan—selected which kings would be placed on their respective thrones.

European rule had dramatic socioeconomic impacts as well. France and Britain used their colonies as export markets for cheap European manufactured goods that competed with locally made products, hurting domestic artisan and craftsman classes. European powers also relied on their imperial holdings as a source of raw materials (cotton, wheat, etc.). These dynamics integrated the Middle East into global markets in a dependent manner as exporters of agricultural or primary (raw material) products, a fact that was an obstacle to future development and prosperity. While European control shaped Middle East states' economic trajectories in key ways, the European powers' disposition toward their Middle East subjects was one of superiority and contempt. France and Britain legitimized their foreign holdings in part with the idea that they had a "civilizing" mission in the region. In particular, they looked down on Islam and facilitated the entrance of Christian missionaries into Middle East societies. Another key impact of the colonial period was a domestic divide that emerged in Middle Eastern countries between urban elites who were exposed to and often adopted the ideas and culture of the French and the British, on the one hand, and the rural masses who remained more oriented toward Arab-Islamic culture, on the other.

Several countries in the region escaped the yoke of direct European rule. Turkey was the successor state to the Ottoman Empire in its core Anatolian Peninsula territory. While European powers had clear designs on that land in the wake of World War I, an Ottoman army officer named Mustafa Kemal organized Turks into a national movement and fought an independence war to establish the borders of what today is Turkey. In Iran, the Qajar dynasty ruled from the late 1700s through the early twentieth century, when power shifted into the hands of Reza Khan and subsequently to his son, Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi. Saudi Arabia is the product of the state-building efforts of the Al Saud tribe, which beginning in the early 1700s sought to expand and consolidate its power in the Arabian Peninsula. The campaign had its ups and downs, but by 1932, Saudi Arabia was a nation-state and it has been independent ever since. Prior to its unification in 1990, Yemen had existed as two separate countries for over a century and a half: Britain ruled South Yemen as a colony, while North Yemen escaped European control. The Gulf state of Oman did as well.

Creation of the State of Israel

If Europe was the source of imperialist policies that left a strong imprint on the borders, politics, economies, and cultures of the Middle East, so too did it provide the beginning of the modern story of the emergence of Israel. In the late nineteenth century, in the face of various forms of discrimination against Jews—the worst being violent pogroms against Jewish communities in Russia and eastern Europe—a man named Theodor Herzl began to advance the Zionist case that Jews constituted a nation, one that needed its own state in order to ensure that Jews could live in security and dignity in a land where they constituted a majority. He and like-minded Jewish leaders then worked to make this vision a reality. They built institutions to raise awareness about and funds for the project, and they also sought the diplomatic support they knew would be crucial if they were to somehow obtain their own state. Zionist diplomatic overtures ultimately found success with Britain, which in the 1917 Balfour Declaration lent its support to the creation of a Jewish national "home" in Palestine.

That support took concrete form at the close of World War I when the League of Nations portioned out the lands east of the Mediterranean Sea to France and Britain as mandates. The legal document establishing the Palestine Mandate included the language of the Balfour Declaration. The pace of subsequent Jewish migration from Europe to Palestine, which had already begun in the late 1800s, began to pick up, with major *aliyot*—or waves of migration—occurring after World War I and in the 1930s. Tens of thousands of European Jews purchased land, settled, and began building new lives, new communities, and new institutions (including collective farms, a labor federation, schools, hospitals, and social services) in Palestine. At that time, however, the vast majority of the existing inhabitants of Palestine (90 percent in 1917) were Arab. They saw Zionism and the influx of Jewish immigrants as threatening to Arab political, economic, and cultural interests.

For a generation, from 1920 to 1947, Britain attempted to manage what would prove to be an intractable conflict. The number of Jews in Palestine grew, as did the amount of land owned and worked by Jews. A rise in Arab landlessness and poverty followed, as the Arabs who had worked the lands purchased by Jews were forced to find employment elsewhere. The Arab community grew increasingly frustrated and despairing. Serious violence between Jews and Arabs broke out in the late 1920s and again in the mid-1930s. The economic strains of the Great Depression, and then Hitler's execution of millions of Jews during World War II, magnified and sharpened the conflict. In 1947, Britain, exhausted by the war and unable to reconcile Jews and Arabs, informed the world it would take its leave of Palestine and turn the problem over to the newly created United Nations.

After sending an investigatory team to Palestine, the United Nations proposed that the territory of the Palestine Mandate be partitioned into two states, with Jerusalem—a city dear to Jews but also to Arab Christians and Muslims—as an international protectorate. The proposed Jewish state would have enclosed 55 percent of the land at a time when Jews represented approximately 32 percent of the population and owned just 6 percent of the total land area. While the Jewish community accepted the partition plan, Palestinian Arabs saw it as unjust and inequitable—and rejected it. This impasse would mean war. With the international community unable to effect a solution, those on the ground prepared to fight. During the mandate years the Jewish community in Palestine had built a military organization, the Haganah, which now went into action seeking to secure the territories the partition plan had designated for the Jewish state. On May 14, 1948, Zionist leaders proclaimed the State of Israel. Almost immediately, the surrounding Arab countries invaded. Israel would be victorious in this war, extending the lands under its control beyond what would have been its borders according to the UN partition. The conflict between the newly created Jewish state and its Arab neighbors continues to the present.

Pathways from Colonialism

Israel was becoming a reality in the Middle East at about the same time that Middle Eastern populations were preparing to throw off the yoke of European domination. Egypt and Iraq achieved independence relatively early, in the 1930s (see Table 1.3). A wave of independence achievements then came during and after World War II, with Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia becoming independent—in that order—between 1943 and 1956. Kuwait, Algeria, and (South) Yemen became independent in the 1960s, and Bahrain, Qatar, and the UAE followed in 1971.

Forcing the French and the British to take their leave was a task that varied in difficulty depending on the setting. Kuwait and the UAE had it relatively easy, as British domestic political discontent with the costs of imperialism prompted a more or less unilateral withdrawal. More often, independence was the product of nationalist movements that arose across the region, called on France and Britain to depart, and put pressure on them to do so. These movements tended to take the form of political parties—for example, the Wafd in Egypt, the Neo-Destour in Tunisia, and Istiqlal in Morocco. In Jordan, Iraq, Syria, and Egypt, nationalist movements used a variety of approaches to get their point across. These ranged from simple entreaties and signature-gathering campaigns, on the one hand, to demonstrations, protests, strikes, boycotts, and sometimes even riots, on the other. The goal was to show France and Britain that attempting to retain control over their Middle East holdings was going to be an increasingly difficult

endeavor—and that the costs of staying outweighed the benefits. In all of these cases, the approaches seemed to work. France and Britain came to the negotiating table and granted independence to these countries—all with little to no violence.

Nationalist movements in Tunisia and South Yemen faced comparatively stiffer resistance from France and Britain, respectively. In those cases, nationalist contests dragged on longer and involved more violent methods, including bombings and assassinations. By far the most bitter independence battle, however, took place in Algeria. France was willing to let go of Syria—a League of Nations mandate that it was officially obliged to prepare for independence—without too much of a fight after having been the mandatory power there for approximately a generation. But Algeria was a colony, not a mandate, and France had been in control there for well over a century. Algeria had been politically integrated into France, and tens of thousands of French citizens had settled there. When in the 1950s a nationalist party called the National Liberation Front (FLN) took shape, it met stiff French resistance. Algerian independence came in 1962, but only after a bloody, eight-year war that took some 700,000 lives.

In the wake of the physical departure of the imperial powers, however, the extent to which Middle Eastern countries were independent was debatable. Often, nominally independent states maintained political, economic, and military ties to their former masters. While this may seem counterintuitive—after all, there was a great deal of ill will and anger toward the Europeans—newly independent Middle East countries were often too weak to do otherwise. In some instances, they were simply unable to force Europeans to leave completely. For example, while Egypt technically became independent in 1936—becoming a member of the League of Nations that year—Britain still controlled Egyptian foreign policy and the Suez Canal. In other instances, leaders maintained those ties more voluntarily, understanding that they could benefit from ongoing political-military support from and trade relations with their former masters. The postindependence Iraqi regime, for example, received significant British military aid, equipment, and assistance, and allowed Britain to retain basing rights in the country. In Jordan, a British officer, Sir John Bagot Glubb, remained commander of the Jordanian army until 1957.

In many cases, these postindependence ties to European powers either endure to the present day or have been redrawn to the United States, which, with France and Britain exhausted at the end of World War II, rose to become the preeminent Western power and a pivotal external player in Middle East politics. Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria maintained close political, economic, and cultural ties with France, for example. Jordan maintained close ties to Britain, but also cultivated increasingly strong links with the United States over time. Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi made Iran a key US political and

military ally in the region. And in the Gulf, Saudi Arabia and the smaller Gulf states came to depend on the United States for security in the wake of the British departure.

In Syria, Egypt, and Iraq, however, lingering ties to European powers after independence did not survive the powerful domestic dissent they generated. In those societies a power struggle emerged that pitted conservative, established elites who had served France or Britain and presided over enduring ties to their former masters against a younger, "challenger" generation (often civil servants, workers, students, and peasants) who disagreed with conservative elites on a variety of issues. For example, while conservative elites were content with the economic status quo, challenger forces—often organized into socialist and communist parties—typically were pushing for land reforms, the nationalization of industry, and other redistributive policies designed to remedy what they felt was an intolerably skewed distribution of wealth in their societies. Challenger forces also strongly objected to conservative elites' enduring ties to Europe. For challengers, European imperialism was a humiliating chapter in the history of their nations, one they could not close the book on until those ties were broken. Such ties were especially difficult to stomach in the wake of British support for Zionism. When in 1948 Arab armies were humiliated by Israel, tensions reached a breaking point. Challenger forces blamed conservative elites for having failed to shepherd national economic, political, and military development in ways that would have allowed Arab states to stand truly independent and militarily victorious in the region.

What followed in Syria, Egypt, and Iraq was a series of coups that reoriented domestic politics and foreign policy for decades. For challenger forces, the task at hand was figuring out a way to oust conservative elites from power. While multiparty elections were being held during these years, conservative elites (rightly) felt threatened by challenger forces and either rigged elections sufficiently to ensure conservative victories or simply ignored their results if they were not favorable. Given that the electoral route to power was closed, the solution challengers often hit upon was the army—where officers and recruits often were sympathetic to challenger views and wielded the coercive power to overthrow the existing regime. Military coups unfolded in Syria in 1949, in Egypt in 1952, and in Iraq in 1958. The political systems established in their wake cut ties to the West, established ties with the West's Cold War rival, the Soviet Union, and pursued redistributive economic policies.

The Structure and Dispositions of "Founding" Regimes After Independence

What, then, did Middle East regimes or political systems look like, after all the dust had settled in the wake of the imperial powers' departure? Here our task is to understand the structure and basic policy orientations of "founding" regimes in the region—meaning the first set of stable, patterned, and lasting processes by which leaders were selected and how those leaders in turn exercised power. Regime-formation processes in the postimperial Middle East would sort countries into three basic categories: single-party dictatorships, monarchical dictatorships, and democratic (or semidemocratic) regimes.

Single-party systems. Political systems dominated by single, preponderant political parties emerged in Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia, and South Yemen—all of which were republics ruled in dictatorial fashion by presidents. In most cases, presidents hailed from militaries, which had been key institutions of upward mobility for the lower classes. The political support of the military was a core anchor for these political systems. But preponderant, ruling political parties also served presidents in their exercise of power. These parties were massive, with systems of branches organized throughout these nations' territories as well as, often, in universities and workplaces. Presidents typically drew from party cadres to fill key positions in the bureaucracy in order to ensure that those in charge of implementing policy were loyal. Presidents also used these parties to distribute patronage (jobs and other material perquisites such as food, attractive terms for loans, etc.) to supporters, to socialize young people into the ideals of the regime, and to mobilize people into demonstrations of public support for the regime on important political occasions. Finally, presidents typically structured "elections" so that their ruling parties won either all or the vast majority of parliamentary seats—making parliaments rubber-stamp institutions.

These regimes adopted a state socialist economic development agenda. They used the power of the state to restructure and grow national economies: they nationalized numerous industries; they invested capital in industrialization campaigns; they implemented land reform programs that broke up the estates of large landholders and redistributed them to peasants; and they built massive state bureaucracies to guide and manage the economy and to deliver social welfare services to the masses. Their twin goals were to augment national power by building a thriving economic base and to see to it that all citizens—not just the elite—benefited.

The single-party dictatorships in the postimperial Middle East also subscribed to the ideals of pan-Arab nationalism as articulated by Egypt's president Gamal Abdel Nasser. He blamed the West for facilitating the emergence of Israel and for dividing Arabs into a number of artificial states after World War I. This weakened Arabs when, according to Nasser and many intellectuals in the region, Arabs in fact constituted their own nation and should have had their own comprehensive state. To restore Arab strength, and to return the whole of the Palestine Mandate to the Palestinians, the divisions wrought by European interference would need to be overcome, and

Arab political systems would need to be unified. How this would be accomplished in practice was never clear—and an experiment in Egyptian-Syrian union begun in 1958 ended in failure just three years later—but the ideals resonated among Arabs, whose hopes were raised that a renaissance of Arab power and dignity would soon be in the offing. As these single-party systems matured through the 1950s and 1960s, the Cold War was building into a crescendo of bipolar competition. With the United States evolving into Israel's most important ally, the Middle East's single-party regimes moved in the direction either of strategic neutrality or of alliance with the Soviet Union.

Monarchies. In the Middle Eastern monarchies—Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, the UAE, Oman, Morocco, Jordan, and Iran—the right to rule stemmed not from elections but rather from claims about the legitimacy of specific families' indefinite monopoly on power. Depending on the country, such claims revolved around a family's historic role in founding the state (Saudi Arabia and Kuwait) and religious lineage (the royal families of several regional monarchies trace their ancestry back to the Prophet Muhammad, for example). In addition to such arguments about the legitimacy of family rule, royal families relied on a variety of other mechanisms for staying in power. Trusted individuals (often family members) headed up the army, the secret police, and the cabinet. And the oil-rich monarchies used portions of their wealth to provide their subjects with elaborate social welfare benefits (free schooling, health care, etc.) to bolster subjects' political loyalty.

Like the single-party dictatorships, Middle Eastern monarchies tended to pursue state-led economic development. The state took the lead in making investments and building industry. The (many) monarchies with oil wealth used a portion of that wealth to establish large public sectors and elaborate extensive social welfare services. Yet while the monarchies followed economic strategies similar to those of the single-party regimes, they did so without the populist and redistributionist ethos that often characterized the single-party cases. Neither did the monarchies subscribe to pan-Arab nationalist ideals. Iran was not an Arab country and thus was marginal to that discourse. The Arab monarchies were threatened by Arab nationalism, in part because in two of the states that advocated Arab nationalism most ardently, Egypt and Iraq, monarchs had been dethroned in very recent memory. In addition, the republican and socialist ethos of those regimes was anathema to traditional ruling royal families and their wealthy, elite political allies.

Thus, while Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and Algeria courted Soviet assistance during the Cold War years, Middle East monarchies tended to ally with the United States. For example, Iran under Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi (1941–1979) became a US client in the Middle East, advancing US foreign policy objectives in the region and buying US military equipment. Resource-poor Jordan relied on the United States for economic assistance and security guarantees. And while the oil-rich monarchies didn't need US economic aid, they did rely on the United States for security guarantees. Rivalries between the Middle East's single-party dictatorships and monarchies thus constituted an important Cold War dynamic in the region.

Democratic and semidemocratic systems. When surveying founding regimes in the postimperial Middle East, in just three countries did citizens have the capacity to potentially vote incumbents out of office through elections: Israel, Turkey, and Lebanon. All three countries' structures featured a president (with Lebanon's and Turkey's having more constitutional authority relative to Israel's primarily ceremonial post) alongside a prime minister and cabinet constituted from an elected parliament. In all three countries, parliamentary elections were organized in such a way that parliaments reflected domestic constituencies in proportional fashion. Israel and Turkey had multiparty systems wherein parties gained parliamentary seats proportionate to the percentage of the vote share each won in elections. In Lebanon, electoral districts and seat allocation practices were designed to represent the country's myriad religious and sectarian groups. Israel and Lebanon were democratic, while significant military influence in politics made Turkey semidemocratic.

Israel and Turkey followed state-led economic development trajectories similar to those selected by single-party and monarchical regimes. In both Israel and Turkey during the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, the state played a major role in the economy—owning substantial assets and directing the priorities and pace of development. Lebanon, by contrast, was a regional exception during this time, in that it preserved a largely market economy during the heyday of state socialism in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. In terms of foreign policy, Israel and Turkey were part of the Western "camp" during the Cold War—Turkey as part of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) alliance, and Israel with its superpower backer, the United States. Lebanon was split between forces seeking to orient politics toward the West and others seeking to make Lebanon part of the pan-Arab nationalist fold; indeed, this divide was one of many stresses that sent Lebanon into fifteen years of civil war beginning in 1975.

The (Poor) Performance of Founding Regimes Through the Late 1970s

While state socialist economic development, Arab nationalism, and the confrontation with Israel dominated the rhetorical and policy landscape beginning in the 1950s, by the 1970s their collective failure had become evident.

State socialist economies did not produce economic growth and material prosperity over the long run for the Middle Eastern countries that adopted them. Instead, many countries faced bankruptcy and the need, beginning in the 1970s and 1980s, to radically restructure the way their economies functioned. Neither did pan-Arab nationalism produce its intended effects. Intra-Arab rivalries—including those between the conservative monarchies and the more radical single-party republics—undermined the dream of Arab unity and strength. The failure of pan-Arab nationalism was underlined—and the ideology discredited—when Arab states suffered another devastating loss to Israel in the 1967 Six Day War. Nearly two decades after Arab states had failed to vanquish the forces of the Jewish state in 1948, in the 1967 war Israel captured the Golan Heights from Syria, the West Bank and East Jerusalem from Jordan, and the Gaza Strip and Sinai Peninsula from Egypt.

These developments undermined the legitimacy of Middle Eastern regimes—especially the single-party republics. Many analysts have argued that Nasser and the leaders of other single-party states (Syria, Iraq, Algeria, etc.) had made an implicit bargain with their peoples in the 1950s that the regimes would provide their citizens with economic prosperity and victory over Israel—but not political participation, free elections, and accountable government. Now, with regimes failing to deliver on their part of this bargain, citizens in the Middle East became politically restive. Because the monarchies had promoted neither populism nor pan-Arab nationalism, they were not as jeopardized by their failure. Still, the resource-poor monarchies were in difficult economic straits. And *all* Arab monarchies' citizens saw themselves at least in part as Arabs rather than just simply as "Saudis" or "Kuwaitis." Arabs' inability to overcome Israel perplexed, demoralized, and led many (in monarchies and republics alike) to attempt to diagnose the roots of Arab weakness.

The Iranian Revolution and the Rise of Political Islam in the 1970s

With the region filled with politically dissatisfied citizens trying to discern the reasons Arab regimes failed to deliver, many settled on variations of one basic answer: that Arab governments and society had distanced themselves too much from the teachings and traditions of Islam. The Arab single-party regimes in particular, while paying lip service to Islam, were quite secular in outlook and practice. Meanwhile, Arab societies, especially their middle- and upper-class urban strata, had adopted Western, secular mores and popular culture—including with respect to ways of dressing, decorating, consuming, recreating, and relating to the opposite sex. To critics, these developments undermined Arabs' Islamic heritage, in turn corrupting and handicapping them

in their quest for dignity, prosperity, and power. Such "Islamist" thinkers harkened back to the days when the Umayyads, Abbasids, and Ottomans—empires that explicitly incorporated Islam and Islamic law into the public sphere—were in their glory, reasoning that political success stemmed from Islamic foundations.

In countries across the Middle East, Islamic movements emerged. In the very influential Egyptian case we should really say that Islamic movements *re*emerged, because the Muslim Brotherhood—the region's first and still one of its most important movements—was founded there in 1928. Established by Hassan al-Banna, a schoolteacher who rejected British political, economic, and cultural penetration of Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood sought to return Egyptians to more pious lifestyles through educational and charitable activities, with the long-run goals of liberating Egypt from European domination, reconstituting the Egyptian state according to sharia law, and pursuing social and economic development. Nasser outlawed the Muslim Brotherhood, but his successor, Anwar Sadat, allowed it to return to action in the late 1970s to counterbalance his leftist opponents. Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood inspired branches in Syria, Jordan, and Palestine. Similar movements appeared elsewhere, including Tunisia's Islamic Tendency Movement and Algeria's Islamic Salvation Front.

These movements received a considerable momentum boost in 1979 when, in Iran, Shi'ite cleric Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini brought down Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi by building a broad political coalition under the umbrella of politicized Islam. From the late 1950s through the 1970s, the Shah had presided over a secular, repressive, Westernizing dictatorship that was tightly allied with the United States, had diplomatic relations with Israel, and gravely mismanaged the Iranian economy despite that nation's considerable oil wealth. In making those choices, the Shah alienated numerous sectors of Iranian society. Khomeini deftly drew upon Islamic symbols and values to formulate a powerful critique of the Shah's regime, temporarily unify a wide variety of political factions, and move millions of everyday Iranians to protest the Shah's regime—at considerable personal risk—in wave after wave of massive demonstrations that ultimately wore down the will of the Shah's armed forces to resist. On January 16, 1979, the Shah left Iran and headed into exile. Khomeini returned to Iranian soil on February 1, 1979, and proceeded to build a new political system: the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Iran's Islamic Revolution sent a shock wave through the Middle East. For incumbents, the success of an oppositional Islamist movement was very bad news. For Islamists, the revolution supplied powerful encouragement that there was hope for their cause. Indeed, much of the "stuff" of domestic politics across the Middle East from the 1980s to 2011 pitted regimes against oppositional forces dominated by Islamist parties or movements.

The comparative strength of Islamist actors—vis-à-vis both incumbents and other oppositional groups—varied from country to country, as did the tactics Islamists espoused. Some groups chose violent trajectories and sought to directly overthrow incumbent regimes, while others rejected violence and bided their time, "working within the system" as they focused on building their influence in society and in the institutions of the state. With few exceptions, however, Islamists were—and are—a political force to be reckoned with, regionwide.

Economic Reform and Democratization Pressures

The rise of political Islam was not the only new reality in the Middle East in the 1970s. Regimes also confronted two additional phenomena that constrained rulers' options and put pressure on their positions. First, beginning in the late 1970s and continuing into the 1990s, nearly every Middle Eastern country had to reform its economy, decreasing the state's role and integrating with the global market economy. Countries have done this to varying degrees—and always reluctantly, because loans from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) designed to facilitate economic restructuring come with potentially politically destabilizing conditions attached, such as policy changes that may cause serious hardships for citizens at the same time that they deprive regimes of key tools of political influence and control. Second, also beginning in the late 1970s and continuing into the 1990s, a wave of democratizing regime change swept through Southern Europe, Latin America, the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, and parts of Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Everywhere, political freedom seemed to be on the march.

For the Middle East's mostly authoritarian incumbent rulers, a new global democratic ethos was unwelcome, as it served to further delegitimize regimes whose constituents were already discontented and who faced increasingly significant Islamist oppositions. Meanwhile, all rulers—democrats and dictators—struggled with painful economic reform processes and worried about how the "losers" would react politically. Yet in the face of these multiple pressures—from Islamists, economic reform, and global democratizing norms—incumbent authoritarian regimes survived for decades, employing a variety of political strategies. Leaders in oil-rich states distributed their largesse in ways that kept key clienteles loyal and muted socioeconomic grievances. Leaders in less wealthy states tended to combine real and systematic repression carried out by the intelligence and security services with "façade" democratization—licensing opposition parties and holding elections that looked competitive while in reality playing fields were very uneven and the positions candidates were elected to were devoid of actual power. Leaders also exploited the fears of many constituencies, both domestic and foreign, who worried about Islamists' power and what they would do with it if allowed to rule. Their argument essentially was, "better the devil you know."

The Arab Spring and Beyond

In December 2010, incumbent Arab authoritarian regimes began, for the first time, to be vulnerable. Massive, territory-wide, peaceful popular demonstrations in Tunisia were triggered by the self-immolation attempt of a desperate young man, Mohamed Bouazizi, and facilitated by labor activists and social media. These protests overwhelmed the security forces, and, when the Tunisian army refused to enter the fray on his side, President Zine el Abidine Ben Ali fled to Saudi Arabia. A single-party dictatorship erected in 1956 and sustained for 55 years by just two presidents had crumbled in one month's time. The Arab public watched this breathtaking turn of events on satellite television, and within weeks similar protests erupted across the region, expressing economic grievances while demanding more participatory and less corrupt governance.

By the end of 2011, when the dust began to settle, three dictators had fallen: Ben Ali in Tunisia, Husni Mubarak in Egypt, and Muammar Qaddafi in Libya. In each of these countries, the stuff of politics then shifted to the election of new, more representative assemblies that took up the herculean task of crafting new constitutions. In Yemen, protests forced President Ali Abdullah Salih to yield power to his vice president. Unlike Ben Ali, Mubarak, and Qaddafi, however, Salih remained part of the political game and a participant in an ensuing national dialogue as head of his political party, the General People's Congress. In the spring of 2010, Bahrain's monarchical regime violently repressed protesters—including with help from Saudi and Emirati forces—and during the ensuing years continued to confront persistent dissidence with arrests, detention, trials, and occasional violence. In Syria, protests precipitated a bloody and protracted civil war.

While in the spring of 2011 all Arab dictatorships seemed vulnerable, as of this writing nine (Algeria and all of the monarchies) appeared to have weathered the storm comparatively unscathed. These regimes were not passive in the face of regional protests. Saudi Arabia led the countercharge, suppressing its own dissidents, sending troops to Bahrain, brokering the agreement that eased Salih out of power in Yemen, and shoring up the poorer monarchies, Jordan and Morocco, with financial and political support. The Moroccan king appeared to have preempted more thoroughgoing political change by offering a set of constitutional amendments that liberalized—but by no means democratized—the monarchy, and then holding new elections. Still, the dictatorships that avoided collapse in the first two post–Arab Spring years nevertheless confronted a new political reality wherein

publics perceive authoritarian rule as less inevitable and less invulnerable—and autocrats undoubtedly will be seeking new methods of shoring up their regimes in the years to come.

Importantly, the Arab Spring's repercussions were not limited to Arab states. In hindsight, mass protests in Iran following a fraudulent presidential election in June 2009 may have been a precursor to the Arab Spring, and incumbent Iranian conservatives no doubt had the Arab Spring on their mind as the 2013 presidential election approached. The fall of Mubarak in Egypt and Ben Ali in Tunisia deprived Israel of two of its most moderate Arab interlocutors while empowering Islamists with a more critical position vis-à-vis the Jewish state. In mid-2011 Israel experienced its own set of serious mass demonstrations, which saw economic grievances take center stage. Meanwhile, the upheavals presented Turkey with diplomatic headaches as it tried to manage the impact of political change on its commercial relationships with Arab states. At the same time, civil war in Syria meant that Turkey (as well as other neighboring states) was burdened with a significant refugee flow as well as worries about resurgent Kurdish demands for autonomy should the Syrian state fracture.

In a heady time, then, this book equips the reader with the general and specific knowledge essential for making sense of contemporary Middle East politics. Part 1 of the book contains seven chapters, one each on an essential dimension of politics and society in the Middle East. These chapters provide an overview of the patterns, trends, and dynamics that characterize the region as a whole, across a number of core topics. Chapter 2, "Governments and Oppositions," analyzes the extent to which citizens can—or cannot—hold their governments accountable through periodic, democratically meaningful elections and the alternation in power of multiple political parties. Chapter 3, "The Impact of International Politics," offers a framework for understanding how dynamics and pressures outside states' borders have shaped the domestic politics of countries in the Middle East. Chapter 4, "Political Economy," analyzes how states have tried to spur economic growth and development, how politics has influenced the substance of economic decisions, and how economic realities in turn impact political dynamics and decisionmaking.

Chapter 5, "Civil Society," examines how citizens in countries of the Middle East organize outside the explicitly political sphere for philanthropic purposes and to advance their political, economic, and social interests—as well as why and how the Middle East's mostly authoritarian regimes have sought to control, curtail, and contain such activities. Chapter 6, "Religion and Politics," explores the three monotheistic faiths that emerged in the Middle East, the extent to which states in the region are religious, and the main forms of politicized religious activism in the region. Chapter 7, "Identity and Politics," considers how various types of attachments—to

religion, language, lineage, and geographic homeland—matter politically. Finally, Chapter 8, "Gender and Politics," looks at the ways that women's (and men's) roles in society have been constructed and contested in the Middle East.

Part 2 of the book builds on these thematic chapters by presenting eleven case studies of contemporary political dynamics in twelve of the region's twenty countries: Algeria, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Turkey. Each of these chapters opens with a historical overview and description of the contemporary political structure of the country in question. Each then examines the seven arenas presented in Part 1 and explicates what specific dynamics animate each arena in each country case.

As the volume will illustrate, a number of key problems, dilemmas, and issues dominate politics in the contemporary Middle East. First, after decades of authoritarian rule, Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya are endeavoring to join Israel, Turkey, Lebanon, and Iraq in crafting political systems in which competitive electoral competition determines who rules. In all seven of these cases, to varying degrees, political actors confront the arduous task of writing, amending, and/or living up to constitutions that allow actors with very different political preferences to make decisions and resolve conflicts through the ballot box rather than via diktat or violence—an enormously difficult and complex political challenge. In the meantime, authoritarian rule persists through large swaths of the region. Where it does, those who rule and those who are ruled will continue to engage in political struggles that will determine the prospects for more participatory and accountable governance.

Second, central to understanding politics in the Middle East is the realization that citizens' self-identification with respect to language, lineage, place, and faith inform their political goals and tactics. These identities often divide political communities in ways that affect contests about the shape of politics. For example, across the Middle East's Muslim-majority states and also in Israel, actors debate whether political rules will be based on secular or religious principles. Until the Arab Spring uprisings, regional dictatorships tended to be quite secular but faced (and repressed) potent Islamist opposition movements; in many places, violent confrontations took place between the two. In the wake of the Arab uprisings, once-banned Islamist parties won elections in Egypt and Tunisia and assumed key roles in governance and the writing of new constitutions. Given the gulf in political perspectives deriving from very different identities, Islamist-secularist interactions and negotiations have been complex, heated, and difficult. Religious, sectarian, and ethnic divides complicate pluralist politics in similar ways in Lebanon and Iraq. In the meantime, many of the region's remaining dictatorships—including Bahrain, Algeria, and Saudi Arabia—discriminate

against sections of their populations whose political identities represent unwelcome challenges to the status quo.

Third, the Middle East faces daunting economic problems that influence political dynamics and are in turn affected by politics. Regime type aside, the goal of generating prosperity that is broadly shared by citizens has eluded even the richest of Middle East states in recent decades. Socioeconomic grievances were a key driver of Arab Spring protests, and newly established governments will be judged in large part by whether and how quickly they can chart a more prosperous course. Indeed the democratic viability of new regimes in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and (potentially) elsewhere will depend heavily on economic factors. In the meantime, surviving autocrats have more reason than ever to worry about economic performance, living standards, and unemployment.

Fourth, an important dilemma for the region's leaders and peoples is how to relate to the West, and particularly the United States. European actors exercised imperial control over the region in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, only to be overtaken by the United States as the major Western hegemon after World War II. Today, Western countries are major (and not always welcome) military players on the ground in the region at the same time that they control the purse strings of global financial institutions and offer democracy as a political model—one that some aspire to and others reject altogether. What the content of diplomatic relations with the West should be and whether Middle East states adhere to Western policy exhortations (regarding economics, family law, human rights, etc.) constitute extremely sensitive political issues that divide and antagonize political parties and civil society actors.

All of these domains—the shape of political regimes, identity politics, economic challenges, and regional relations with the West—help explain women's status in the region and will continue to influence the outcomes of struggles over gender norms. Significant intraregional variation notwithstanding, women in the Middle East participate in the labor force and political institutions at a far lower rate than do their male compatriots; regional norms prescribe a primarily domestic role for women; and women's legal rights in the area of family law are distinctly circumscribed. While for many (male and female) this state of affairs is acceptable, others work to achieve increased legal parity, economic autonomy, and political voice for women.

While these dynamics and challenges animate politics in the region, they are not unique to the Middle East. Indeed, they are on the political agenda of nations throughout the non-Western world. Moreover, within the Middle East there is a diversity of experience: rich states and poor states, democracies and dictatorships, countries that have cooperative relationships with the West and countries that vigorously confront the West, places where

women can't drive and a place where a woman has served as prime minister. This text helps readers navigate this "messy reality" to comprehend both broad patterns and trends in the Middle East as well as the diversity of experience that exists within the region.

Notes

1. Note that there are five additional Arabic-speaking countries not included in the Middle East as defined by this text, because their politics do not align with dominant patterns and trends in the region: Mauritania, Sudan, Somalia, Djibouti, and Comoros.

2. These characterizations of political rights and civil rights are adapted from Freedom House's methodology statement, available at http://www.freedomhouse.org.